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OUR VIEW



AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta

President Donald Trump smiles during the inaugural luncheon at the Statuary Hall in the Capitol, Friday in Washington.

Living with Trump

Friday it became official: Donald J. Trump was sworn in as the 45th president of the United States.

No, he is not favored by a majority of Americans, but he won the election. The keys to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue have exchanged hands and the earth did not tilt off its axis. The country still stands, and the democratic transfer of power yet again provided proof of the strength and resilience of the United States.

We've made clear our distrust of Trump. In our view, he has not proven to be a moral person, nor knowledgeable about the many problems this country faces. We're worried that his bag of tricks is filled only with platitudes and insults.

But worried is no way to go through life, nor a presidential term. Perhaps Trump will be similar to the 44 men before him, just one that likes to beat his own chest a little more than the rest.

We're happy to give him credit for each and every success he earns. And we hope those successes are plentiful and we really do get sick of winning, whatever that means.

But we know that Trump has a tendency toward division and a penchant for conflict. His few calls for unity are drowned out by his continual jabs at whoever he chooses to fight with at the time — House Republicans, the media, civil rights

legends or Meryl Streep.

Whether President Trump likes it or not, this will be a divided country. He gets to run it, we have to live in it.

So how do we make it better? How can we bridge the divide?

We can start with communication. We consider our thoughts and write them down, send them to you to read and respond. We hope you

do more of the latter — two-way conversation is the first brick toward bridge-building.

This opinion page is not a safe space. We expect to present ideas that others don't agree with, and to be

confronted with ideas that challenge our thinking as well.

We can all say something, and we can all do something. Protest peacefully, if you so chose. Donate to the charity of your choice. Buy American products. Hire American workers. Read a newspaper. Be involved in local decisions. Make suggestions. Write your Congressman and tell them how Obamacare affected you — if it saved your life or priced you out of house and home. We need knowledge, not rancor. Our politicians need it even more.

Donald Trump has his work cut out for him. We must no longer cheer his rock throwing — nor our own — but instead implore him to build.

Together we must work, against all threats both foreign and domestic, to Keep America Great.

We hope Trump's successes are plentiful and we really do get sick of winning.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of publisher Kathryn Brown, managing editor Daniel Wattenburger, and opinion page editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

OTHER VIEWS

Officeholders shouldn't be able to hand-pick successors

The (Bend) Bulletin

Oregon House Bill 2429 is a tribute to Doug and Gail Whitsett. But it's not for the work the married Republicans did to represent their districts in Eastern Oregon. It's for the way the Whitsetts effectively picked their successors.

Just minutes before the filing deadline for the Republican primary in March, former Klamath County Commissioner Dennis Linthicum filed for Doug Whitsett's Senate seat. Businessman Eric "Werner" Reschke filed for Gail Whitsett's House seat. Then, the day after the deadline, both Whitsetts pulled out of their respective races.

The Whitsetts, Linthicum and Reschke insisted they had done nothing wrong. But plenty of people thought it looked wrong.

It was wrong. Rep. Mike McLane, R-Powell Butte, the House minority leader, said he might have filed to run

for Doug Whitsett's Senate seat if he had known Whitsett did not plan to run. It was unfair to McLane and anyone else who thought about running but perhaps did not want to challenge an incumbent.

Democrats don't do well in that part of Oregon. The Republican primary can be the only real contest. Both Linthicum and Reschke went on to win their elections relatively comfortably.

This legislative session, State Rep. Julie Parrish, R-West Linn, introduced HB 2429 to attempt to prevent a similar thing from happening again. The bill gives office-seekers more time to apply if an incumbent state senator or state representative files for re-election and then withdraws.

It doesn't matter if there was a deal or not in the withdrawal of the Whitsetts. Voters should pick who represents them. The incumbent officeholder should not be able to game the process to influence his or her successor. Lawmakers should pass HB 2429.

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



OTHER VIEWS

The internal invasion

This is a remarkable day in the history of our country. We have never over our centuries inaugurated a man like Donald Trump as president of the United States. You can select any random group of former presidents — Madison, Lincoln, Hoover, Carter — and none of them are like Trump.

We've never had a major national leader as professionally unprepared, intellectually ill informed, morally compromised and temperamentally unfit as the man taking the oath on Friday. So let's not lessen the shock factor that should reverberate across this extraordinary moment.

It took a lot to get us here. It took a once-in-a-century societal challenge — the stresses and strains brought by the global information age — and it took a political system that was too detached and sclerotic to understand and deal with them.

There are many ways to capture this massive failure, but I'd rely on the old sociological distinction between gemeinschaft and gesellschaft. All across the world, we have masses of voters who live in a world of gemeinschaft: where relationships are personal, organic and fused by particular affections. These people define their loyalty to community, faith and nation in personal, in-the-gut sort of ways.

But we have a leadership class and an experience of globalization that is from the world of gesellschaft: where systems are impersonal, rule based, abstract, indirect and formal.

Many people in Europe love their particular country with a vestigial affection that is like family England, Holland or France. But meritocratic elites of Europe gave them an abstract intellectual construct called the European Union.

Many Americans think their families and their neighborhoods are being denuded by the impersonal forces of globalization, finance and technology. All the Republican establishment could offer was abstract paeans to the free market. All the Democrats could offer was Hillary Clinton, the ultimate cautious, remote, calculating, gesellschaft thinker.

It was the right moment for Trump, the ultimate gemeinschaft man. He is all gut instinct, all blood and soil, all about loyalty over detached reason. His business is a pre-modern family clan, not an impersonal corporation, and he is staffing his White House as a pre-modern family monarchy, with his relatives and a few royal retainers. In his business and political dealings, he simply doesn't acknowledge the difference between private and public, personal and impersonal. Everything is personal, pulsating outward from his needy core.

The very thing that made him right electorally for this moment will probably make him an incompetent president. He is the ultimate anti-institutional man, but the president sits at the nerve center of a routinized, regularized 4-million-person institution. If the figure at the center can't



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

give consistent, clear and informed direction, the whole system goes haywire, with vicious infighting and creeping anarchy.

Some on the left worry that we are seeing the rise of fascism, a new authoritarian age. That gets things exactly backward. The real fear in the Trump era should be that everything will become disorganized, chaotic, degenerate, clownish and incompetent.

The real fear should be that Trump is Captain Chaos, the ignorant dauphin of disorder. All the standard practices, norms, ways of speaking and interacting will be degraded and shredded. The political system and the economy will grind to a battered crawl.

That's ultimately why this could be a pivotal day. For the past few decades our leadership class has been polarized.

For America to thrive, people across government will have to cooperate and build arrangements to work around the president.

We've wondered if there is some opponent out there that could force us to unite and work together. Well, that opponent is being inaugurated, not in the form of Trump the man, but in the form of the chaos and incompetence that will likely radiate from him, month after month. For America to thrive, people across government will have to cooperate and build arrangements to quarantine and work around the president.

People in the defense, diplomatic and intelligence communities will have to build systems to prevent him from intentionally or unintentionally stumbling into a global crisis. People in his administration and in Congress will have to create systems so his ill-informed verbal spasms don't derail coherent legislation.

If Trump's opponents behave as clownishly as he does — like the congressmen who are narcissistically boycotting the inaugural — the whole government will get further delegitimized. But if people redouble their commitment to constitutional norms and practices, to substance and dignity, this thing is survivable.

Already you see the political system uniting to contain Trump. In negotiations on the Hill, administration officials feel free to ignore his verbiage on health care and other issues. Members of his team are already good at pretending that Trump doesn't mean what he clearly does mean, on matters of NATO and much else.

I've been rewatching "Yes, Minister" these days. That was a hilarious British sitcom about a permanent government apparatus that contained and overruled a bumbling political master. America will need a beneficent version of that sort of clever cooperation.

With Trump it's not the ideology, it's the disorder. Containing that could be the patriotic cause that brings us together.

David Brooks became a New York Times Op-Ed columnist in September 2003. He has been a senior editor at The Weekly Standard, a contributing editor at Newsweek and the Atlantic Monthly, and is currently a commentator on PBS.

YOUR VIEWS

Land near Umatilla River not best place for new housing

The purpose of this letter is to let people know of a proposed change in the status of the land on the north side of the Umatilla River. The city owns a number of small parcels of land on the north side of the river. One of the larger plots lies at the end of Northwest Seventh Street (east side of the street). The planning commission proposes to partition a segment of that plot and offer it for sale for the purpose of developing housing. The land is zoned R3, high density residential.

The property description given by the planning commission is in error. It indicates the parcel is fairly level land, with a noticeable drop-off nearer the river. The drop-off is actually very steep at the north side of the parcel in question. The 100-year flood line is at the mid-point of the plot.

It is proposed that vehicle access to the property be a driveway (yet to be constructed) at the end of Northwest Seventh Street. Because it is a dead-end street, Northwest

Seventh does not lend itself to parallel parking. Current residents must "head in," which allows them to back around before pulling forward up the hill to exit. Using half the street as a driveway is impossible under the circumstances.

At a time when many cities are working to make their environment more livable by promoting wild spaces and park areas, it seems backward for us to destroy one of Pendleton's most enjoyable areas by developing it instead.

True, the city's various departments are concerned about — and are attempting to improve — the housing in town. An excellent goal. But this is not the best place to do it.

I encourage people to come down to the south end (the bottom) of Northwest Seventh Street and take a look at the land the city proposes to develop. Imagine another apartment or condo in this location.

Is this what we want? Is this what's good for Pendleton?

Peg Willis
Pendleton